EUR:WE:DHMcKillop:cal
(Drafting Office and Officer)

CONFIDENTIAL

1965 MAR 24 PM 12 21

EXCISE

COPYFLO-PSR

643

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Approved in U - 3/11/65
Approved in S - 3/19/65

DEPARTMENT OF STATE Memorandum of Conversation

REVIEWED BY Duncan Reed DATE 2/2/84

~~RDS or XDS~~ EXT. DATE OADR
TS AUTH Purls REASON(S) DC memo
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐ 5/13/83
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☐
RELEASE DENIED ☒ in part
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS b-1

PART II of 3

DATE: February 19, 1965
Time: 4:30 p.m.
Place: Secretary's Office

SUBJECT: Arms Sales to the Middle East, and other subjects

RECEIVED

PARTICIPANTS:

United States

The Secretary
The Under Secretary
Governor Harriman
Ambassador Bohlen
COPIES: Assistant Secretary Tyler
Mr. McKillop, WE
Mr. Phillips, P

France

Foreign Minister Couve de Murville
Ambassador Hervé Alphand
Mr. Charles Lucet, Foreign Ministry
Mr. Jacques de Beaumarchais, Director of Cabinet
Mr. Claude Lebel, Director of Press and Information Service
Mr. Bruno de Leusse, Minister, French Embassy.

Copies to: (See Page 3)

24

Arms Sales to the Middle East.

Under Secretary Ball mentioned that he had spoken the previous afternoon to Couve about this subject, and that it was his understanding that the French policy is based on the willingness to sell to both sides on a commercial basis. Couve confirmed this understanding.

Mr. Ball then raised the question of the possible sale of French Mirage planes to the Lebanon and Jordan Governments, which he said would be preferrable to the purchase of Russian planes by these countries. He said that the price of the Mirages is too high for these two countries in contrast to the low price tag the Russians place on their MIGs for political purposes. The Secretary asked if the French might not have some "surplus" Mirages, to which Couve replied, unfortunately not. Mr. Ball suggested that the French might wish to consider means of getting the price down or relieving the cost burden by some sort of short term financing. Couve was non-committal on this suggestion.

The Secretary stated it was a pity that countries who could so ill afford it had to get involved in an arms race and wondered if some kind of arms limitation program for the Middle East could not be worked out on the basis perhaps of "mutual example", as the Soviets call it.

Jordan River Waters - Couve referred to French concern over the possibility of armed conflict arising from Arab plans for diverting Jordan River waters from Israeli use and stated our two countries should remain in close touch on this problem. The Secretary agreed and Ambassador Bohlen said that this

is being

CONFIDENTIAL

4

Declassified by NLJ

Microfilmed for LBJ Library

GPO 965971

s being done in Paris. Couve thought that the Lebanese could be usefully approached but the Syrians much less so. Noting that the diversion works would be built in the Lebanon with the water going to Syria, Couve thought that the line to take with the Lebanese is that it is not in their interest to become involved in a situation where they have little to gain and much to lose. The Secretary agreed and thought that the Lebanese could find ways and means of postponing a showdown by various delaying tactics.

COPIES TO:

S/S
G
S/P
G/PM
EUR-3
NEA-3
INR
CIA
DOD
IO
USUN

White House
AmEmbassy PARIS
AmEmbassy AMMAN
AmEmbassy TEL AVIV
AmEmbassy BEIRUT
AmEmbassy NICOSIA
AmEmbassy ANKARA
AmEmbassy LONDON
AmEmbassy MOSCOW
AmEmbassy ATHENS